

NELSON, SIDNEY AND RUTH, ROWHOUSE  
(Cottage B)  
6112 Paseo Delicias  
Rancho Santa Fe  
San Diego  
California

HABS NO. CA-2311

HABS  
CAL  
37-RANSE,  
9-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SIDNEY & RUTH NELSON ROWHOUSE  
(Cottage B)

HABS No. CA-2311

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Location: 6118 Paseo Delicias, Rancho Santa Fe, San Diego County, California. Rancho Santa Fe Block D, portion lot 19, all lot 20, portion lot 21. San Diego County parcel number 266-271-18.

UTM zone 11, easterly 481170, northerly 3653390

Present Owner  
and Occupant: Emma J. Worstell

Present Use: residence

Significance: This building, commissioned by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company as small-scale pre-sold speculative housing in the midst of the commercial center of the town, is one of a group of four rowhouses in the Civic Center of Rancho Santa Fe designed by Lilian Rice in emulation of urban residences in Spain. The public (street) facade is decorated with iron window grilles and heavy wooden gate, and there is a private back garden.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1926. An article by Lilian J. Rice, "More Building in 1928 than ever Before," (Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no 7 (January 1928): 11, 14) states that in 1926 the "group of four residences were built along the west side of Paseo Delicias."

A "Completion Report" on the four Paseo Delicias rowhouses, dated April 12, 1927, and submitted to each rowhouse owner by L. G. Sinnard of the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, states: "The Civic Center Cottages, consisting of four dwellings, were constructed by Mr. C. M. Paddock under contract dated July 12th, 1926. . . . Work on these cottages, hereinafter designated as cottage A, B, C, and D, was begun July 15, 1926 and practically completed December 1, 1926." (p. 1)

2. Architect: Lilian Jenette Rice
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: Chain of ownership taken from Assessment Records, Santa Fe Irrigation District, Rancho Santa Fe, and Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Deed Records, Collection of Reginald M. Clotfelter:

SIDNEY AND RUTH NELSON ROWHOUSE  
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1922-1926 title to portions lots 19, 20, 21 owned by Santa Fe Land Improvement Company

8/28/26 purchased by Sidney R. and Ruth Nelson (sales contract C-269)

12/30/63 title transferred to Charles R. and Marguerite Nelson

1983 sold to Mrs. Emma Jane Worstell

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The builder/contractor, as cited in the "Completion Report," was C. M. Paddock, an independent builder in Rancho Santa Fe. This document does not mention, nor is there any other evidence of, the names of any suppliers or subcontractors who worked on the project, although, under the terms of the contract between the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company and Paddock signed on July 12, 1926, subcontracting work was permitted. No information on Paddock has been obtained.
5. Original plans and construction: The original plan for the four Paseo Delicias rowhouses, published in the October 1928 Architectural Record (p. 318; copy included in supplemental material for HABS No. CA-2310) shows the Nelson residence second from left. Early views can be found in a scrapbook entitled "Douglas Fairbanks-Mary Pickford Fairbanks" in the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives, on p. 52 of Connie Clotfelter's Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe, and in several early issues of the Rancho Santa Fe Progress.

The original plan shows a three-bedroom residence, having an entryway, living room with corner fireplace, dining room, kitchen and laundry rooms, and one bath. A back garden was reached through small flights of steps from either the laundry room or living room. A one-car garage fronted on an alleyway. The entire complex was enclosed within a wall, ensuring privacy from the nearby commercial strip. Building materials were not indicated on the original plan.

C. M. Paddock's original bid for the construction of Cottage "B" was \$7,070.71, submitted to the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company on June 18, 1926. The final cost to the Nelsons was \$7,459.33; this sum included \$219.26, which represented the cost of alteration orders specified by the purchasers during construction.

6. Alterations and additions: Alterations to the original structure have been minimal and have not radically altered the original fabric as seen from Paseo Delicias: the kitchen has been completely modernized (drop ceiling, new appliances, cabinets, sink, linoleum); the original bathroom has been modernized, and the window in that bathroom has been altered from a double-hung

sash to a single fixed sash; in the northwest bedroom, the closet has been converted into a half bathroom, and a projecting closet added; several original doors have been removed or replaced; the original flooring has been covered with carpet. Most of these alterations can be dated after 1983; it is not known, however, what alterations may have occurred before that date.

- B. Historical context: Among the first residences to be built in Rancho Santa Fe, this building, like the three others in the row constructed simultaneously, were commissioned by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, and designed by their resident architect Lilian Rice, of the San Diego firm Requa and Jackson. This rowhouse was first owned by Sidney and Ruth Nelson. According to a memorandum written by their son Charles, Sidney Nelson came to Rancho Santa Fe in 1922, as a member of the project development staff of the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company. When family quarters were constructed, his wife and son joined him, occupying the La Flecha House (HABS no. CA-2304) from June 1923 until 1926, when they purchased the rowhouse at 6118 Paseo Delicias. In the spring of 1927, L. C. Sinnard, the first Rancho Santa Fe development project manager, retired, and was replaced by Sidney Nelson. (Charles Nelson Memorandum, 6/29/91, 1-2.) Nelson was one of the original signers of the Rancho Santa Fe Covenant on July 14, 1927, which incorporated the village under the aegis of the Rancho Santa Fe Association. In 1928, when the Land Improvement Company's holdings were bought out by a group of Pasadena businessmen acting for the Rancho Santa Fe Corporation, Nelson became their project manager. (Connie Clotfelter, Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe, 40.) By 1930, however, the Corporation was bankrupt and the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company was forced to repossess the land. Nelson then opened his own real estate office in the village. He was also active in civic affairs, serving for many years as secretary/manager of the Association, and as secretary on the Art Jury. Ruth Nelson was also active in village life: she started Rancho Santa Fe's first library in 1924; was one of the charter members of the Rancho Santa Fe Garden Club, and became Rancho Santa Fe's first historian, publishing Rancho Santa Fe: Yesterday and Today in 1954. After the deaths of Sidney and Ruth Nelson in the early 1960s, title passed to their son, Charles, who rented the property to a succession of tenants until 1983, when it was bought by the current owner, Mrs. Emma J. Worstell.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: This rowhouse is one of four designed as a unit by Lilian Rice and built simultaneously in 1926. As residential structures fully integrated within the semi-urban core of Rancho Santa Fe, yet architecturally segregated from the neighboring commercial strip through the use of varied setbacks,

enclosed patios and gardens, low gable and flat parapet roofs, and decorative ironwork, the rowhouses are a major example of Rice's use of the Spanish vernacular idiom to give variety and character to Rancho Santa Fe's Civic Center.

2. Condition of Fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This one-story rowhouse, with over-all dimensions of 67' x 26', is asymmetrical in plan and facade. The left, approximately four-bay portion of the house is raised slightly higher than the right, two-bay portion. With approximately 1350 square feet of living space, it is also the only one of the four Paseo Delicias rowhouses with three bedrooms. The building features a large rear garden, which occupies about 70 percent of the property space.
2. Foundations: 2' high x 1' wide poured concrete perimeter wall with interior piers.
3. Walls: Exterior walls of the structure are frame with stucco; they are generally 7'-6" thick, except on the street facade where they measure 1'-2".
4. Structural system, framing: Wood framed construction, with poured concrete piers embedded in the foundation soil.
5. Porch, steps: The present rear porch is a replacement but follows the configurations of the original. The two-riser concrete front step with decorative iron rail is placed perpendicularly to the front door.
6. Chimney: The brick chimney serves the living room fireplace. The chimney stack rises 2'-6" above the roof line, and is stuccoed. Construction alteration order #1, as noted in the "Completion Report," specified that the chimney was to be built "with 4" brick walls instead of 8" walls." The flue was "to be plastered both inside and outside except where exposed to the weather." (p. 21)
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The recessed entrance has a large, heavy, double-width tongue-and-groove side-hung plank double door with its original decorative iron knocker and decorative iron latchset, and decorative iron hinge bolts. The right door only is active. The braced, wooden plank alley gate is side-hung and has a metal latch. Access to the back patio is gained by an eight-light double French door from the living room and a one-panel door with

replacement screen from the laundry room. Construction alteration order #1, as noted in the "Completion Report," specified that the "french doors on the north elevation [were] to be made with four lights, four high. Each pair to be made so that the right hand door and the right hand screen will open first as you go out." (p. 22)

- b. Windows and shutters: Typical windows are wood-framed single-sash casement with wood sills. Other window types include eight-light French windows facing the street from the living room and dining room, and arched single-sash double casements in the south bedroom. On the street facade, there are iron grills. Construction alteration order #1, as noted in the "Completion Report," specified that the "windows in the south elevation of the living room, dining room, and bedroom #1 [were] to be three lights, three high." (p. 22)

- 8. Roof: The roof over the back half of the building is flat with a parapet, covered with built-up roofing. Over the front of the four-bay portion of the structure, however, the roof is gabled, and over the front of the two-bay portion it is hipped. These roofs are covered in red, regularly laid Spanish tile, and each has exposed construction (rafter tails and wood boarding) underneath. Construction alteration order #2, as noted in the "Completion Report," specified that the builder was "to use Granada machine-made pan tile on roof in place of hand-made pan tile." (p. 24)

Clay tile scuppers project through the parapet wall for drainage on every facade.

- 9. Decorative features: Decorative iron lamps on the street wall, and on the wall outside the laundry room. Decorative iron window grills on the street facade. Construction alteration order #4, as noted in the "Completion Report," specified that "exterior front entrance fixtures to be selected by owner." (p. 28)

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: Four of the seven rooms are aligned along the front edge of the property, facing Paseo Delicias. The living room is on one side of the entrance hall; the dining room and bedrooms are on the other. All of the bedrooms, as well as the bathroom, open onto a back hall, connected to the front hall by the dining room. The kitchen and utility room at the rear of the structure are also reached through the living room.

2. Flooring: Original narrow-board oak now covered with carpeting, except in the entryway by the front door. A construction alteration order (number not recorded), as noted in the "Completion Report," specified that "13/16 oak flooring" was to be used "in the living room, entrance hall, dining room and the steps between the entrance hall and the dining room." Oak toe mold was also specified. (pp. 12, 22, 24) Original flooring in the kitchen has been replaced with modern linoleum. There is tile on the hearth of the fireplace.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster and paint, with a simple picture molding in the living room and south bedroom.
4. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Typical door is one-paneled. There are rounded archways from the entryway into the living and dining rooms, and a flat archway from the dining room to the hallway, now partially filled in with swinging saloon-style doors. Original swinging door from the dining room to the kitchen is now wallpapered; original doors have been removed from the west bedroom, and from the laundry room; original entryway closet door has been replaced.
  - b. Windows: Screened on the inside to allow for ventilation.
5. Decorative features and trim: Three niches with built-in shelving in living room. Brick trim around fireplace and on mantel is possibly an addition. Alteration order #4 specified that there were to be "hand wrought [electric light fixtures] finished with rub finish in the living room, entrance hall, and bedrooms." (p. 28) These decorative fixtures have been removed and replaced.
6. Hardware: No original hardware remains.
7. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating, ventilation: Original electric heating system still extant; floor furnace in dining room. Original flue in northeast corner of kitchen removed, but metal flue hat still visible above the roof line.
  - b. Lighting: No original lighting fixtures remain. Construction alteration order #3, as noted in the "Completion Report," stated that "electric light fixtures [were] to be hand wrought fixtures finished with rub finish in the living room, entrance hall and bedrooms. All other interior fixtures...to be stock fixtures." (p. 28)

- c. Plumbing: In laundry room, original deep sink with iron legs. Modern plumbing fixtures throughout the rest of the building.
- d. Other: Wood-plank box enclosing original electrical meter and panel located on back wall of kitchen. Wood-plank firehose cabinet on front facade. Construction alteration order #1, as noted in the "Completion Report," specified that a radio plug was to be installed "where directed." (p. 21) Alteration order #3 specified that the residence was to be wired "for telephones to be installed at a later date." (p. 26)

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The house faces east onto Paseo Delicias, the main street and village center of Rancho Santa Fe; it backs onto an alley which cuts through the block.
- 2. Historic landscape design: Although little is known about the original landscape design for the rear courtyard, Charles Nelson, in his 1989 manuscript, mentions several of the original plantings in the back garden: a redwood arbor with Cecil Bruner climbing roses against a garden wall; a honeysuckle beneath the kitchen window; a rose garden. Today, the garden has been relandscaped. One planting that remains, however, is the large redwood tree planted in 1927 by Charles Cheney, author of Rancho Santa Fe's Protective Covenant, in 1927, as a gift for young Charles Nelson.

A wall of concrete block, partially stuccoed, surrounds the complex on three sides; its height varies from 5' to 6' according to the slope of the site. There is a gate opening onto a back alley.

- 3. Outbuildings: There is a concrete block 14' x 26' garage, in the northeast corner of the lot. It features a flat roof which slopes toward the alley, to allow rainwater to run off, and two sets of casement windows. Original garage doors replaced.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

Architectural Record 64 (October 1928): 318.

B. Early Views:

The Endless Miracle 1 no. 1 (July 1927): 4.



Clotfelter, Connie. Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe. Rancho Santa Fe: Congreg, 1985: 52.

"Douglas Fairbanks-Mary Pickford Fairbanks" Scrapbook, Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives, n.d.

McGroarty, John Steven. The Endless Miracle of California. n.p., n.d.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

"Completion Report. Civic Center Cottages, Rancho Santa Fe, California. April 12, 1927." Collection of Lundi Moore.

Nelson, Charles. "Earlier Years in San Diego and Rancho Santa Fe." 1989. Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Memorandum Notes for the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society." June 29, 1991. Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Clotfelter, Connie. Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe. Rancho Santa Fe: Congreg, 1985.

Eddy, Lucinda Liggett. "Lilian Jeanette Rice: The Lady as Architect." M.A. Thesis, University of San Diego, 1985.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Lilian Jenette Rice: Search For A Regional Ideal." Journal of San Diego History 29 (Fall 1983): 262-285.

Gebhard, David, and Robert Winter. A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California. Santa Barbara, CA: Peregrine Smith, 1977.

Nelson, Ruth R. Rancho Santa Fe: Yesterday and Today. n.p., n.d. [1954]

Rice, Lilian J. "More Building in 1928 than ever Before." Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 4 (January 1928): 11, 14.

E. Supplemental Material:

Page 10: Contract, cost, and alteration information taken from  
"Completion Report. Civic Center Cottages, Rancho Santa Fe, California.  
April 12, 1927." Collection of Lundi Moore.

Prepared by: Lauren Farber  
HABS Project Historian  
Rancho Santa Fe, CA  
June 1991

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society, Inc. and Rancho Santa Fe Association. Under the direction of Robert J. Kapsch, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), and Paul Dolinsky, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey and Project Leader, the documentation was completed in the HABS field office at Rancho Santa Fe, California, during the Summer of 1991 by Professor John P. White (Texas Tech University), Project Supervisor; Architectural Technicians Sheri L. Bonstelle (Columbia University); Juan Tampe (Catholic University of America); Piotr Trebacz (Warsaw University of Technology, Poland, U.S./I.C.O.M.O.S.); E. Matthew Walter (University of Hawaii at Manoa); and Architectural Historian Lauren Farber, Sally Kress Tompkins Fellow (University of Delaware).

APPENDIX: CONTRACT, COST, AND ALTERATION ORDER INFORMATION FROM: "Completion Report. Civic Center Cottages, Rancho Santa Fe, California. April 12, 1927." Collection of Lundi Moore.

PAGE            ACTION

1            Santa Fe Land Improvement Company sales contract #269 signed by S.R. and Ruth Nelson on August 28, 1926.

7            C.M. Paddock bid for Cottage "B" on June 18, 1926: \$7070.71

8            Final cost of Cottage "B" (as of April 12, 1927):  
percentage of cost of all four cottages: 24.77%  
cost exclusive of alteration orders: \$7240.07  
cost of alteration orders: 219.26  
final cost: 7459.33

9            SUMMARY OF ALTERATION ORDERS:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Add</u>	<u>Deduct</u>
1	\$ 63.62	\$ 67.50
2	29.93	11.67
3	8.00	
4	83.64	
(5)		
6	3.75	
7	5.20	
8	31.50	2.50
9	75.29	
TOTALS:	300.93	81.67

FINAL TOTAL OF ALTERATION ORDERS: \$219.26

Alteration Order #1

21            -Chimney built with 4" brick walls instead of 8" walls. Flue to be plastered both inside and outside except where exposed to the weather.

22            -To use 13/16" select oak in living room, entrance hall, dining room, and steps between entrance hall and dining room.  
-O.P. flooring instead of tile in bathroom.  
-French doors on north elevation to be made with 4 lights, 4 high. Each pair to be made so that right hand door and right hand screen will open first as you go out.  
-Windows in south elevation of living room, dining room, and bedroom #1 to be 3 lights, 3 high.

Alteration Order #2

24            -To use Granada machine-made pan tile on roof in place of hand-made pan tile.  
-Use oak toe mold in all rooms having oak floor in place of O.P. toe mold.

- 25 -At a point 20' back of residence "C," bring riser from the fire line thru the wall for a hose rack with 75' of hose. Place a box in the service yard wall for hose with a door in each side, one opening into service yard A, and the other opening into service yard B. Owner will furnish hose, hose rack, and valve.
- Alteration Order #3
- 26 -Wire residence for telephones to be installed at a later date.  
-Place an extra radio loud speaker plug in dining room and living room.
- Alteration Order #4
- 28 -Finish hardware to be stock Western Metal hardware, nickel finish in bath, kitchen and laundry, and sanded brass finish in all other rooms. Front door trim to be a dead black - thumb latch selected by owner.  
-Electric light fixtures to be hand wrought fixtures finished with rub finish in living room, entrance hall and bedrooms. All other interior fixtures and rear exterior fixtures to be stock fixtures. Exterior front entrance fixtures to be selected by owner.
- Alteration Order #7
- 30 -Provide a #1170 sink back.
- Alteration Order #8
- 31 -Build 2 hinged doors under the sink. Doors to be similar to those in Residence of Mrs. H.L. Porter and to have nickel spring hinges.  
-Omit 2 coats of varnish on counter and shelves in kitchen; same to receive one coat of boiled linseed oil applied hot.  
-Provide all pairs of casements opening on south elevation with weather strip as shown on attached detail.  
-Chamfer wood grilles on "B" as directed.
- 32 -Wax floors 2 coats after dull coat of varnish. (Oak floors only.)
- Alteration Order #9
- 33 -Lay sidewalk to curb.

ADDENDUM TO:  
SIDNEY & RUTH NELSON ROWHOUSE  
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6118 Paseo Delicias  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
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